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INFO USMISSION EC BRUSSELS PRIORITY

AMEMBASSY VIENNA PRIORITY

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TAGS: TECH, ENGR, OECD

SUBJECT: INTERNATIONAL COOPERATION IN RADIOACTIVE WASTE MANAGEMENT

1. AT INVITATION OF DR. ROBERT SEAMANS, ADMINISTRATOR, ERDA KEY NUCLEAR ENERGY OFFICIALS OF U.S., CANADA (JOHN FOSTER, AECL), FRG (SCHMIDT-KUESTER, BMFT), FRANCE (C. FREJACQUES, CEA), JAPAN (S. TAMIYA, JAEC), SWEDEN (O. NORELL, BOARD FOR NUCLEAR SAFETY RESEARCH), UK (SIR JOHN HILL, UKAEA) AND IAEA (C. MILLAR) MET IN DENVER ON JULY 11 TO DISCUSS INTENSIFICATION OF INTERNATIONAL COOPERATION IN WASTE MANAGEMENT. THE RESULTS OF THIS DISCUSSION INCLUDED AN INFORMAL AGREEMENT TO HAVE AD HOC WORKING COMMITTEE UNDER THE LEADERSHIP OF US DEVELOP DETAILED RECOMMENDATIONS THAT COULD SERVE BASIS FOR MULTINATIONAL COOPERATION. WE EXPECT TO URGE OUR PARTNERS IN THIS EFFORT TO AGREE TO USE EXISTING IEA/NEA MECHANISMS FOR ANY IMPLEMENTING ACTIONS THAT MAY STEM FROM THE RECOMMENDATIONS OF THE AD HOC GROUP.

2. FOLLOWING SUMMARY OF INFORMAL MEETING WAS AGREED TO:

"LEADING NUCLEAR REPRESENTATIVES OF THE UNITED STATES, CANADA, FEDERAL REPUBLIC OF GERMANY, FRANCE, JAPAN, SWEDEN,

UNITED KINGDOM, AND THE INTERNATIONAL ATOMIC ENERGY AGENCY, MET ON JULY 11, 1976, DURING THE DENVER INTERNATIONAL SYMPOSIUM ON THE MANAGEMENT OF WASTES FROM THE LWR FUEL CYCLE TO DISCUSS THE INTERNATIONAL ASPECTS OF RADIOACTIVE WASTE MANAGEMENT. IN THE COURSE OF THE DISCUSSIONS, IT WAS AGREED THAT EARLY DEMONSTRATION OF COMPLETE WASTE MANAGEMENT SYSTEMS IS A KEY TO SUSTAINED VIABILITY OF NUCLEAR POWER. (FYI: RADIOACTIVE WASTE ISSUE HAS BEEN RAISED AS MATTER OF PUBLIC CONCERN WITH SOME IMPACT ON COMMITMENTS TO AND TIMING OF NUCLEAR PROGRAMS ENDFYI). THE GROUP AGREED THAT ACCELERATED COOPERATIVE ACTIONS BETWEEN NATIONS ARE REQUIRED, INCLUDING BROADENED AND MORE IN-DEPTH EXCHANGE OF INFORMATION AND JOINT R AND D PROJECTS.

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"THE GROUP AGREED THAT THERE SHOULD BE COMPLETE AND FREE EXCHANGE OF ALL INFORMATION RELATED TO TERMINAL WASTE STORAGE. IT ALSO AGREED TO EXPLORE MEANS OF EXCHANGING MORE FULLY THE INFORMATION IN CLOSELY ALLIED AREAS OF WASTE SOLIDIFICATION, GASEOUS WASTE SEPARATION, AND OTHER WASTE AREAS, AND TO IDENTIFY AT AN EARLY DATE, POSSIBLE MEANS TO ACCELERATE EXISTING AND TO INITIATE NEW COOPERATIVE PROJECTS. AT SUCH TIME AS SPECIFIC RECOMMENDATIONS

ARE AVAILABLE, EXISTING INTERNATIONAL ORGANIZATIONS WILL BE INVITED TO COOPERATE IN THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE ACTIVITIES, SO AS TO ASSURE THAT THE BENEFITS OF ANY AGREEMENT WOULD REACH OTHERS WHO ARE OR WILL BE SEEKING THEIR OWN SOLUTIONS TO THE ULTIMATE DISPOSITION OF RADIO-ACTIVE WASTE.

"THE GROUP AGREED TO FORM AN AD HOC WORKING COMMITTEE WITH A SENIOR REPRESENTATIVE FROM EACH COUNTRY, TO DEVELOP DETAILED RECOMMENDATIONS IN THE VARIOUS AREAS DISCUSSED (SEE "GENERAL CONCLUSIONS", BELOW) AND PRESENT BY SEPTEMBER 15 A REPORT WHICH WILL INCLUDE A RECOMMENDED SCOPE OF WORK THAT COULD SERVE AS THE BASIS FOR MULTINATIONAL ACTION. THE U.S. AGREED TO TAKE THE LEAD IN CALLING THE AD HOC GROUP TOGETHER.

-----GENERAL CONCLUSIONS-----

1. AGREED THAT SOLUTION TO THE WASTE STORAGE PROBLEM IS CRITICAL TO THE SUSTAINED VIABILITY OF NUCLEAR ENERGY IN ALL COUNTRIES.
2. SINCE EARLY DEMONSTRATION OF THE ABILITY TO HANDLE HIGH LEVEL WASTE IS NECESSARY FOR ALL COUNTRIES, IT WAS AGREED THAT INCREASED COOPERATION IN TERMINAL STORAGE SHOULD TAKE PLACE TO ACCELERATE DEMONSTRATION OF THE GEOLOGIC REPOSITORY CONCEPT. THE FIRST STEP SHOULD BE A FREE AND COMPLETE EXCHANGE OF INFORMATION.
3. AGREED THAT MAXIMUM COOPERATION IN HIGH LEVEL WASTE SOLIDIFICATION TECHNOLOGY SHOULD VIGOROUSLY BE PURSUED RECOGNIZING THAT COMMERCIAL INTEREST MAY BE INVOLVED.
4. AGREED THAT AN INTERNATIONAL CONSENSUS BY TECHNICAL LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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EXPERTS ON ACCEPTABLE SOLUTIONS TO THE WASTE STORAGE PROBLEM WOULD BE HIGHLY DESIRABLE. HOWEVER, EACH NATION, BECAUSE OF ITS OWN UNIQUE SITUATION, WILL NEED TO SEEK ITS OPTIMAL SOLUTION(S).

-----END GENERAL CONCLUSIONS

3. AT FOLLOW-UP DISCUSSIONS ON JULY 13, IT WAS AGREED THAT AD HOC GROUP WOULD MEET AT ASSE, FRG STARTING SEPTEMBER 6. GROUP TO BE CHAIRED BY DR. CARL KUHLMAN, NUCLEAR FUEL CYCLE AND PRODUCTION DIVISION, ERDA, WASHINGTON. MANFRED HAGEN, BMFT TO REPRESENT FRG, Y. SOUSSELIER, CEA TO REPRESENT FRANCE. OTHER COUNTRIES TO ADVISE KUHLMAN BY END JULY OF THEIR DESIGNEES. IT WAS AGREED LIMIT MEMBERSHIP OF AD HOC GROUP TO COUNTRIES

MENTIONED. U.S. WILL CIRCULATE BY MID-AUGUST AGENDA, QUESTIONS FOR DISCUSSION, ETC., FOR SEPTEMBER 6 MEETING BASED ON CONSULTATIONS WITH DESIGNATED REPRESENTATIVES. GROUP WILL EXAMINE PROGRESS OF EXISTING INTERNATIONAL EFFORTS INCLUDING THAT OF IEA/NEA RADIOACTIVE WASTE MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE (RWMC) AND IDENTIFY ANY IMPEDIMENTS TO PAST EFFORTS AT COLLABORATION. GROUP TO REPORT BACK TO NATIONAL LEADERS (IDENTIFIED PARA 1) WHO WILL CONSIDER RECOMMENDATIONS AND IMPLEMENTING MECHANISMS. IT RECOGNIZED THAT NEA MOST LIKELY ORGANIZATION TO COORDINATE AGREED UPON ACTIONS.

4. U.S. REPS MET SEPARATELY WITH FREJACQUES, CEA, TO IDENTIFY RESTRICTIONS ON FLOW OF INFORMATION DUE TO FRENCH COMMERCIAL INTERESTS MENTIONED BY HIM AT JULY 11 MEETING. FREJACQUES INDICATED THAT WASTE VITRIFICATION AND OFF-GAS TREATMENT CONSIDERED BY FRENCH AS PART OF REPROCESSING PLANT ACTIVITIES, WHICH OF COMMERCIAL INTEREST, AND THUS DETAILED PROCESS AND DESIGN DATA SUBJECT TO COMMERCIAL RESTRICTIONS. HOWEVER, OPERATING DATA, SAFETY AND OTHER EVALUATION PROCEDURES, AND SAMPLES OF VITRIFIED WASTE WOULD BE AVAILABLE FOR FREE EXCHANGE.

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